

CHANDAMAMA

FEBRUARY 1977

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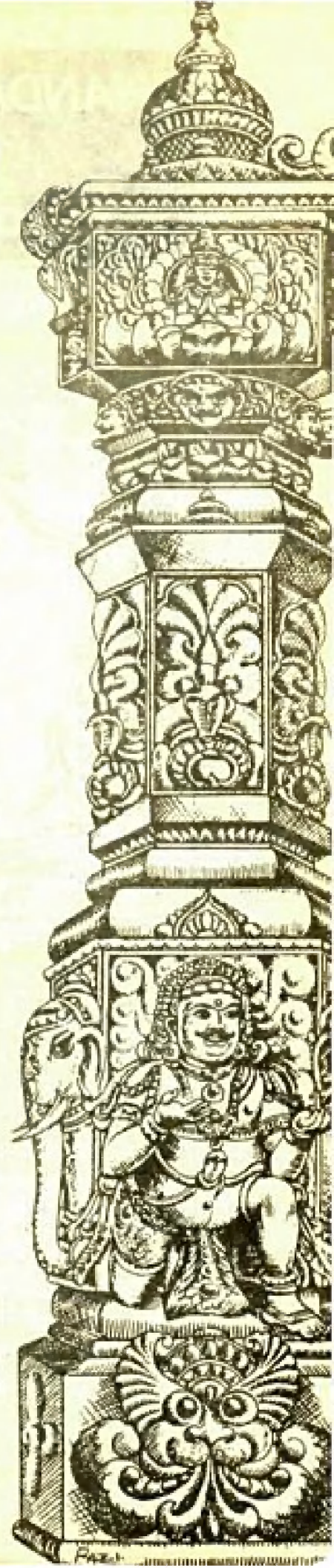
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CHANDAMAMA

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No. 8

Founder : CHAKRAPANI

AN ANCIENT LESSON THAT STILL HOLDS GOOD

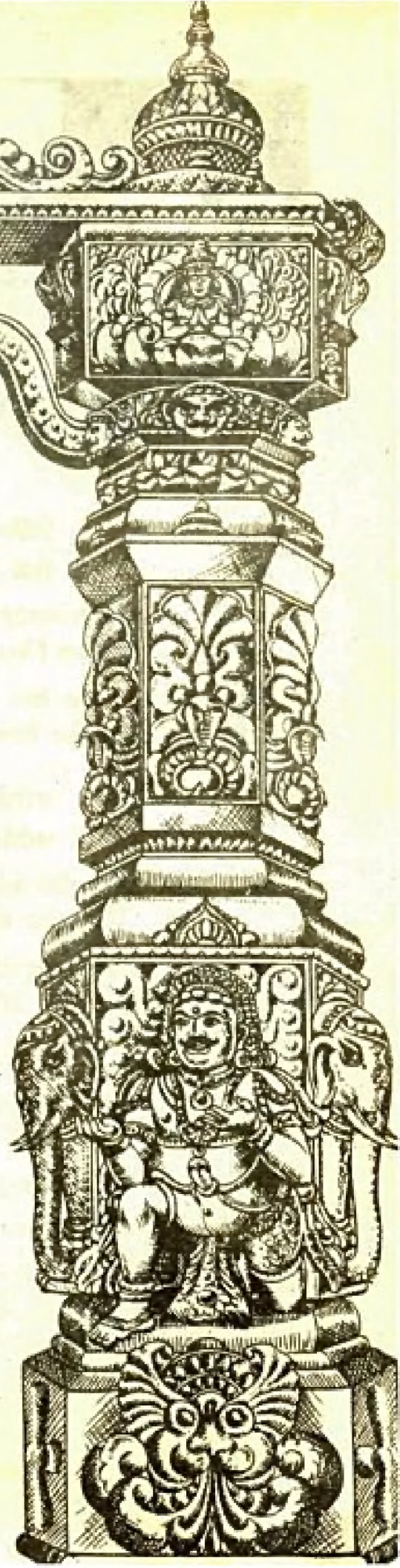
Since time immemorial people almost all over the world have believed that there goes on a continuous battle — between the good and the evil. Scriptures and folklores tell this through numerous anecdotes and instances.

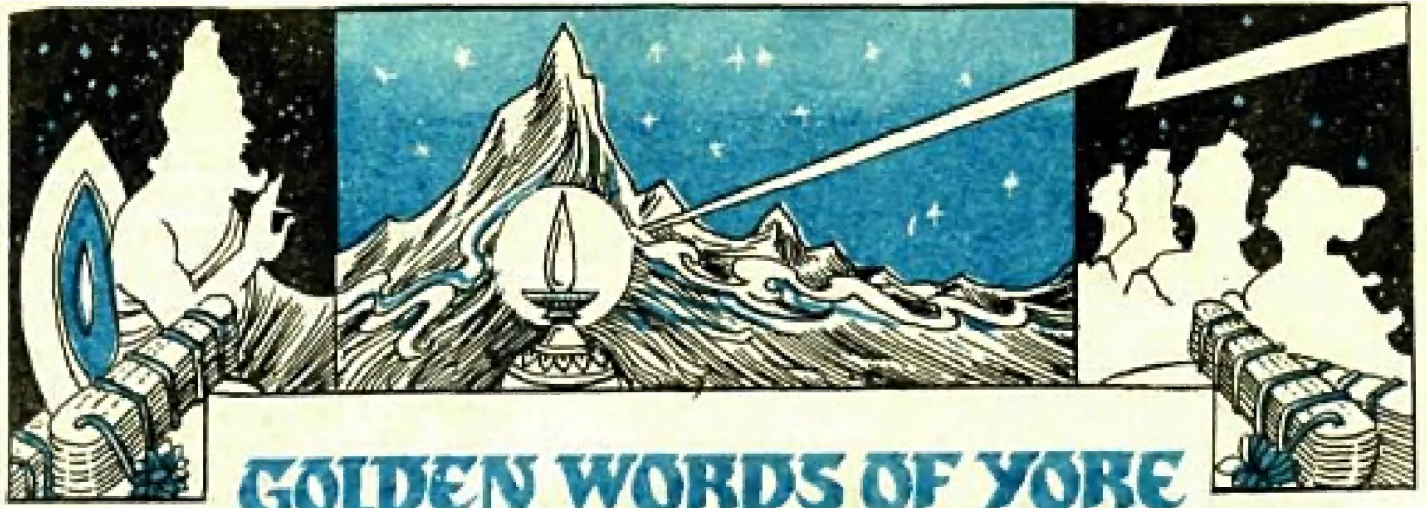
Such an anecdote is presented in this issue; in our illustrated series, **The Story of India**. It is indeed a highly meaningful story. When the evil has power, it can proceed to destroy its benefactor without any qualm. But, luckily, being ignorant, the evil often destroys itself.

So, if man must have more power at his disposal, he should be sure of his own capacity to use the power nobly. Man is exploring and mastering more and more power through progress in science. Unless man also becomes the master of a greater consciousness, sooner or later he might bring about his own total ruination.

Good and evil are mixed up. Each individual must make a conscious effort towards the victory of the good over the evil within himself. As a priest once explained, "There are three votes concerning one's life. God votes in one's favour; the devil votes against the person. The deciding vote is one's own."

Thus, with God's vote and his own, man can build for himself a life of Truth.





GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

निर्विषेणापि सर्पेण कर्तव्या महती फटा ।

विषं भवतु मा भूद्वा फटाटोपो भयङ्कुरः ॥

Nirviṣeṇāpi sarpeṇa kartavyā mahatī faṭā

Viṣam bhavatu mā bhuddhā faṭāṭopo bhayaṁkuraḥ

Whether a snake has poison or not, it should raise its hood. That alone is sufficient to strike terror.

The Panchatantram

परोक्षे कार्यहन्तारं प्रत्यक्षे प्रियवादिनम् ।

वर्जयेत् तादृशं मित्रं विषकुम्भं पयोमुखम् ॥

Parokṣe kāryahantāram pratyakṣe priyavādinam

Varjayet tādṛśam mitram viṣakumbham payomukham.

One who utters pleasing words before you but creates obstacles for you behind you, is like a jarful of poison with a layer of milk on the surface and must be avoided.

The Hitopadeshaḥ

लोकयात्रा नयो लज्जा दाक्षिण्यं त्यागशीलता ।

पञ्च यत्र न विद्यन्ते न तत्र दिवसं वसेत् ॥

Lokayātrā nayo lajjā dākṣiṇyam tyāgaśīlatā

Pañca yatra na vidyante na tatra divasam vaset.

One should not pass even a day at a place which is bereft of the five factors: means of livelihood, a code of conduct, the sense of shame, compassion and the spirit of sacrifice.

The Hitopadeshaḥ

CAUTION AND ALERTNESS

THE DEMON AND HIS BOON



The story of India is, to a great extent, the story of a continuous battle between the good and the evil. In ancient scriptures, demons, mad with lust and power, are shown harassing the sages who are the seekers of truth. Often gods had to fight out the menace of the demons.

Long, long ago, Vrikasura was the king of the demons. He was quite powerful, but he desired to possess even more power. However, he did not know how to fulfil the desire.



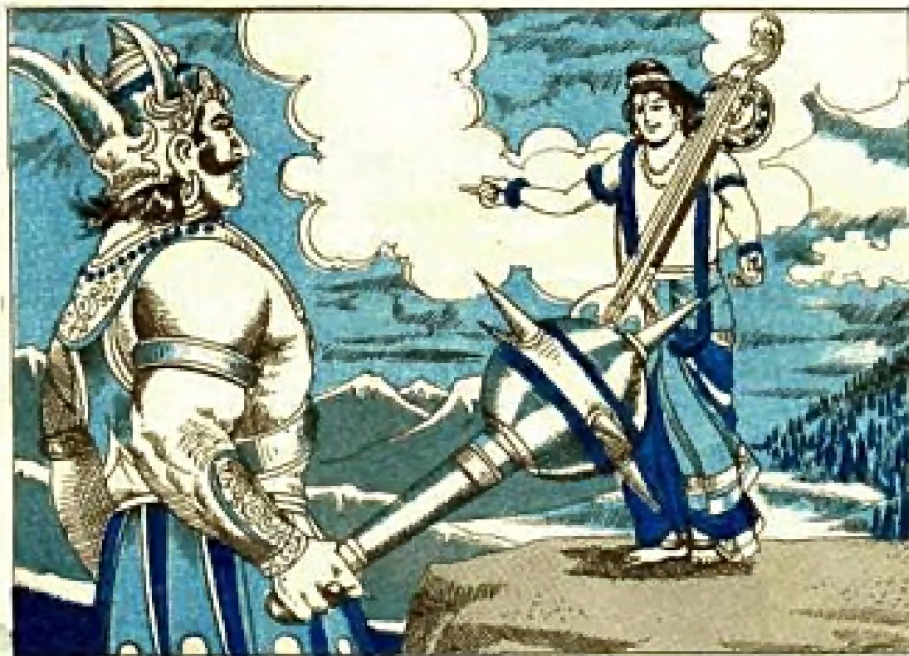
Vrikasura would defeat kings and scare away sages easily. That was great fun for him. But that did not satisfy him. He must be able to vanquish his enemies in the twinkling of an eye!



Once, the great sage, Narada, descended from heaven, playing his Veena, to survey the condition of the world. As he approached the earth amidst the Himalayas, Vrikasura could hear his music and rushed to meet him.

"Tell me, O sage, from whom can I obtain an easy boon?" asked the demon-king.

Narada was not very happy to answer Vriksasura. But, for sake of truth, he said, "Of the three great Gods, it is Shiva who is appeased easily!"



Among the holiest spots in the Himalayas is Kedarnath, famed to have the presence of Lord Shiva since ages. Vrikasura went there and sat in penance, meditating on Shiva.

Shiva was pleased to see the demon-king concentrating on Him. He appeared before him and woke him up from meditation, saying, "I am impressed with your devotion. What boon do you wish to obtain?"



"O great God! I wish to have a very simple boon from you. Grant that if I keep my hand on someone he should be destroyed at once; no trace of him should be left."

"It is granted," said the pleased Shiva.

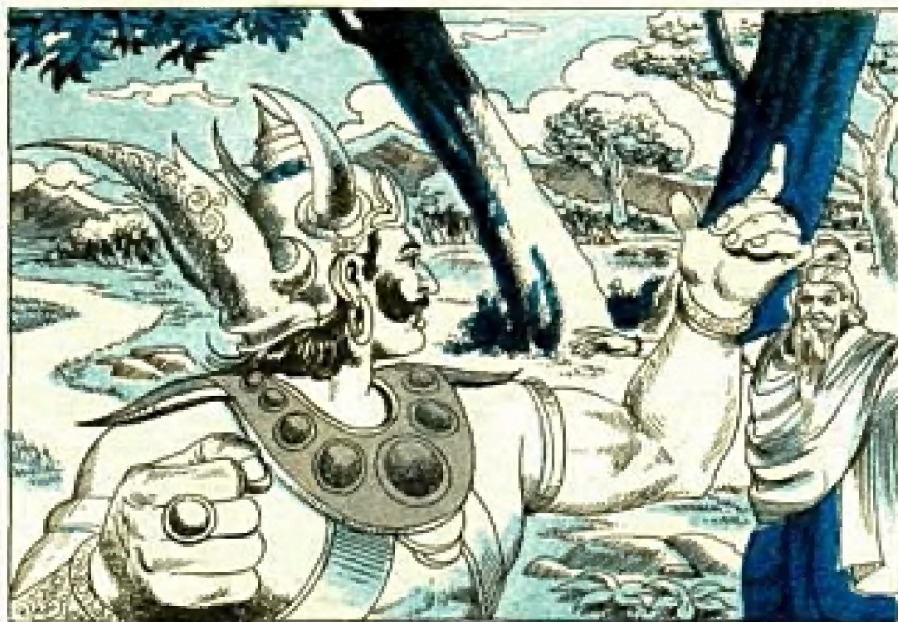
"Well, Lord, I should thank you. But I will do that after I have tried out the power of your boon. Come on, let me keep my hand on your head and see if you cease to exist," said the demon. The scared Shiva ran away. But the demon pursued him.





Shiva ran for long. But the demon was in no mood to give up the chase. At last the tired Shiva reached Vishnu and narrated his plight. Vishnu, disguised as a mendicant, came out to meet the demon.

The disguised Vishnu stood before Vrikasura and said, "Sonny! It is so easy to try the power of the boon. Just place your hand on yourself and see!"



The idea appealed to Vrikasura who was by then too tired to reflect on it. He at once placed his hand on his own head and disappeared for ever.

Thus are the demons destroyed through their own arrogance and ignorance- this symbolic story tell us.



THE BRIDEGROOM FOR LEELA

A poor couple had no child. They adopted an orphan girl and she grew up to be a beautiful maiden. She was named Leela.

At a neighbouring village lived a young man, Ravi. He was an able-bodied farmer. He possessed an acre of land which he had turned into a fine orchard. He was prospering well.

One day Leela's father told her, "There is a young farmer named Ravi who should make a fine husband for you."

"A mere farmer? Don't I deserve anything better father?" grumbled Leela.

"But Ravi is so nice a choice! I do not know a better, young

man than him!" answered the father.

"My friends say that I deserve the hand of a king or a general," said Leela.

"That is a way of saying that you are beautiful which no doubt is true. But I am old enough to tell you that one who marries a king or a general is not necessarily happy. Besides, a poor man that I am, I cannot find a king or a general for you," said the father.

Leela was not satisfied with his father's explanation. She had grown quite ambitious.

She was often heard making enquiries with her friends about the possibility of her getting married to a rich or influen-



tial young man. But her friends did not seem to be of such help.

It was a summer noon and the village streets were quiet. Leela sat alone on the veranda of her house, brooding over her future. Suddenly she heard the sound of a string of horses galloping. She went out into the street to see what was happening. One of the captains of the king's army was going on an urgent business, accompanied by some soldiers.

The captain pulled the rein and stopped his horse when he saw the maiden. He said that he was thirsty. At his request Leela

fetched a mug of water for him. The captain, on enquiry, learnt that she was not married. "Why not marry me?" he ventured to propose.

"Why not, if my father agrees?" said Leela, "I wanted to marry a king or a general, but a captain would do!"

The captain met Leela's father and expressed his desire to take the girl with him. The father found out that Leela was quite eager to go with him. "You may take her away, if you promise to duly marry her," the father said. The captain promised and made Leela sit behind him and galloped on.

It so happened that on the way the captain met his boss, the king's general. Now, while on an urgent mission, a captain was not expected to carry a maiden with himself. The discovery could cost him his position. The captain, who knew well the general's nature, got off his horse and bowing to him, said, "This maiden desired to marry a king or a general. That is why I thought it wise to bring her to your notice."

"Hm!" uttered the general gravely and surveying the girl, said, "I don't mind marrying her. Put her on my horse."

Leela was transferred from the captain's horse to the general's. But they had not gone far when they came across the king, quite unexpectedly.

"Who is this maiden, general?" queried the king. Leela was delighted to see the king. She hopped down from the horse and greeted him.

"My lord, she desired to marry a king. I thought, I better carry her to your presence," mumbled out the nervous general.

"Thank you, let her come with us. We will see what can be done about her desire," said the king. A palanquin and four bearers were brought from the village at hand. Leela sat in the palanquin and followed the king's party.

The king was on his way to inspect an old and dilapidated temple which he wanted to repair. He soon arrived at the deserted temple and entered it. There was a large stone image in the temple but worship of the deity had stopped for a long time. After the king's servants cleaned the image, the king stood before it with folded hands for a while.

Leela now realised that though the general was greater



than the captain and the king was greater than the general, the image was greater than the king. She decided to follow the king no more, but to marry the deity and remain in the temple.

When the king prepared to leave for his palace, Leela said, "Kindly allow me to be here. I have decided to look upon the deity as my husband and lord!"

The king was moved by the maiden's words. He thought that she was a genuine devotee. He said, "If you feel like dedicating yourself to the deity, I have no right to claim you as my bride. Do as you wish. I

will soon send a few maid-servants to attend on you and enough provision for your comfortable living."

The place became deserted again after the king's party left. Leela was in the temple when a dog entered it. Since nobody visited the ruined temple, the dog had been accustomed to frequent it. As Leela looked on with surprise, the dog climbed to the head of the image and settled to a snug rest.

"This dog seems to be greater than the deity!" said Leela to herself and when, after an hour, the dog went out of the temple, she followed it.

The dog once looked back at her. She said, "I know how great you are. I should have married you only if you were a human being."

It was evening. The dog reached its master's house.

"Where had you gone away, you wretched creature?" shouted the young master and he planted a soft kick on his pet. The dog licked its master's feet.

"Here is a yet greater being," Leela said to herself. She advanced at the young man and said, "Will you kindly accept me as your wife?"

The young man looked with amazement for a second and then said in a loving tone, "I have already given word to your father, haven't I, Leela? What doubt is there that I will be glad to marry you?"

Leela recognised the young man now. He was Ravi, the farmer. They were soon married—to the happiness of Leela's father, to the greater happiness of Ravi, and to the greatest happiness of Leela, for, she had discovered that Ravi was greater than the king!





IN SEARCH OF NECTAR

Once upon a time, in the eastern part of India, there lived a mendicant who was very much moved by the suffering of humanity. He read many scriptures and learnt about the remedies of many a disease. He collected herbs from the forest and prepared medicines out of them. People who suffered from ailments flocked to him. He gave them medicines, but always said, "In order to be free from diseases, you must be free from all bad habits. If you keep your body and mind pure diseases cannot attack you."

Very few appreciated what he said. Most people were satisfied with his medicines. But the mendicant was always keen

to put a bit of good sense into them.

As years passed, the mendicant was worried at the fact that those who were cured by him of some diseases came back to him after some time with other diseases. How to cure the people of all diseases and possible diseases, once for all? This was the question with which he was now taken up.

After some time he left for the Himalayas with all his disciples. There he met a number of yogis and asked them his question: How to cure the people of all the diseases for all time?

Some of the yogis said that they did not know the answer.



Others told him that although they knew, they would not say. However, at last he came across one yogi who told him that one could remain free of all diseases only by taking nectar. The yogi then handed over to the mendicant a sheaf of old palm-leaves on which was written the formula for preparing nectar.

The mendicant studied the text of the palm-leaves carefully. He found the names of the herbs and fruits and other stuffs with which to prepare the nectar. But the text firmly said that the nectar would work only in such persons who had no worldly

ambitions and desires and who had complete faith in the nectar, in one who prepared the nectar, and in God.

The mendicant picked out four of his disciples who were real seekers and who had no worldly desires. He entered the Himalayan forests with them in search of the rare plants necessary for preparing the nectar. After a year's wandering he managed to gather all the plants and the other stuffs and prepared the nectar.

Now the time came for making use of the nectar. He knew that all his four disciples were true seekers, but he was not sure if all had complete faith in the nectar, in himself, and in God. He summoned them and said, "I am now going to try the nectar on myself first. Wait and see."

The mendicant took a draught from the earthen pot containing the nectar. At once he sprawled on the ground, as if he were dead!

The disciples were perplexed. Then one of them said, "Our guru had not made the nectar properly. That is why it became poison for him." Two other disciples agreed with him. But the fourth one said, "I will



do whatever the guru has done.” He then took a sip of the nectar and fell down near his guru.

“It was foolish of him to drink it,” said his friends. Then they went away to arrange for wood to burn the dead-bodies.

The mendicant sat up soon. Then sat up his disciple. The mendicant smiled and said, “Only we two deserved the nectar. I am glad that you had

complete faith in me. The other three would not benefit even if they take the nectar. However, my time in this world is over. I am going. I bless you and wish that you continue to live a long life as a pure soul, hale and hearty, and give light to those who aspire for it.”

The mendicant lay down. But a luminous form emerged from his body and went up as the disciple looked on.

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES



CLINCHING THE DEAL!

One day a poet met a certain landlord and recited a small verse in his praise. In the verse, the landlord had been described as equal to God Indra in power.

"Wonderful! This poet deserves a handsome reward," said the landlord to his clerk. The poet felt encouraged and recited yet another verse, describing the landlord as equal to Kubera, the God of Wealth.

"The poet deserves far greater reward than I had in mind earlier," exclaimed the landlord looking at his clerk.

The happy poet then took his seat. The clerk asked the landlord lowering his voice, "How much should I pay him for a reward?"

"Not a paisa," whispered the landlord. "He flattered me; I also flattered him equally. The deal is clinched!"



ARYABHATTA-A Radical Genius

India's first satellite which went into the space last year was named *Aryabhatta* after the great astronomer of the 5th century. Modern scholars recognise the fact that Aryabhatta has greatly influenced astronomical and mathematical thoughts all over the world through the centuries. Ancient Greeks referred to him as *Arduverius* and Arabs called him *Arjavas*.

And there was a time when his theories were frequently discussed by the scholars of India. Alberuni, the Arab savant who travelled in India about a thousand years ago, mentions of Aryabhatta several times in his work. At one place he writes, "In the book of Aryabhatta of Kusumapura we read that the mountain Meru is in Himavant, the cold zone, not higher than a *yojana*." This shows how Aryabhatta had measured mountains on the basis of certain formulae he had evolved.

Yet, so little is known about him! A great genius though he

was, he did not leave behind him any account of his life and his quest. However, we know that he was born in A.D. 476. India is still observing his 1500th birth anniversary, through discussions on his theories by eminent scholars.

His birth place was Kusumapura, adjacent to the city of Patna, called Pataliputra in olden days. Some think that he was a contemporary of Varahamihira, the renowned astronomer and mathematician of King Vikramaditya's court. Vikramaditya was a great patron of scholars. He had gathered in his court nine foremost geniuses of his time, famous a *Navaratna* or "the nine gems". This illustrious group included Kalidasa, the immortal poet. If Aryabhatta was not counted among the "gems", it was perhaps because his views were too radical to be accepted by his famous contemporaries. No doubt, Varahamihira has contradicted some ideas of Aryabhatta.

But most probably Aryabhatta lived before Varahamihira and "the nine gems" came to prominence. In any case, it would not have been easy for Aryabhatta to gain immediate recognition. Not only were his ideas much ahead of his time, but also he pronounced them while he was young. In fact, his book, *Aryabhattiya*, was written when he was 23 years old:

Yet, the book abounds in

profound ideas. It contains his astronomical observations and his device for measuring time intervals between the meeting of two planets moving in opposite or the same directions, among other things. The work states the rules for the summation of natural squares and cubes. His contribution to the theory of numbers is great. As a Russian scholar said recently, "He was the first in the world literature to formulate very ele-

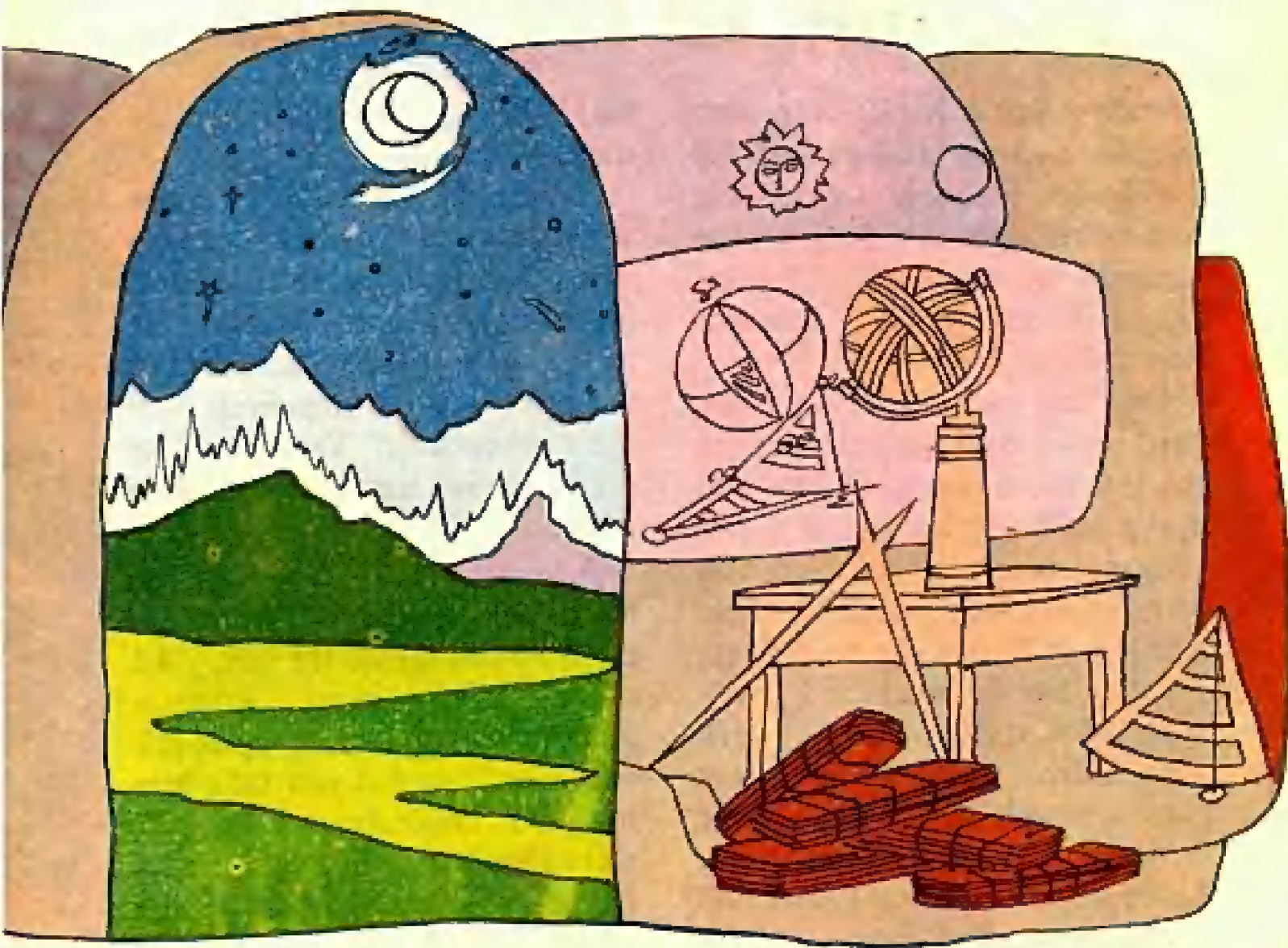


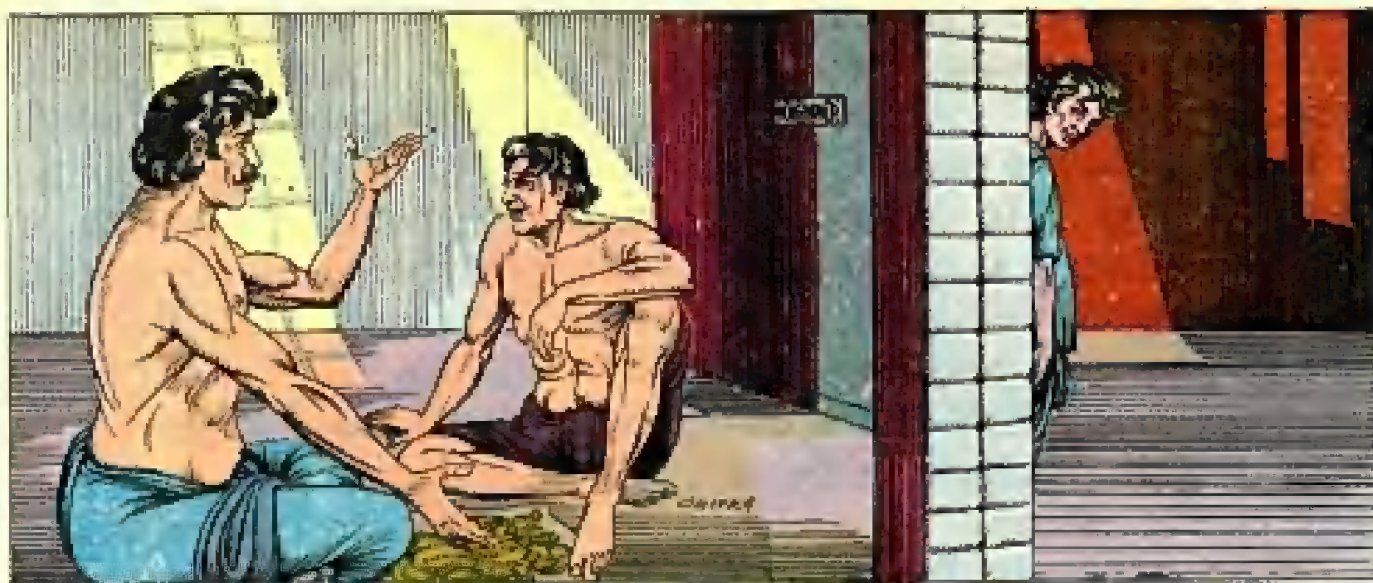
gant methods of integer solution of indeterminate equation of the first degree."

Remarkable too were his ideas in geometry. He defines the area of a triangle as the product of the height multiplied by a half of the base and the area of a circle as a half of the circle's length multiplied by a half of the diameter.

These are only few of his formulations which went a long way in shaping the world thou-

ght in these subjects. It is not difficult to imagine the young Aryabhatta, seated in the open, surrounded by Nature's bounty, meditating on the problems of astronomy and mathematics. He had some worthy disciples who listened to him with sincere interest, for, it appears from the style of his book that what was written down were only a series of supplementary notes to what the young master had orally stated.





RETURN TO HAPPINESS

Ramdass was a young man who lived in a bazar and earned his livelihood through work. He passed his nights sleeping on the veranda of an inn. The innkeeper liked him and Ramdas was quite happy.

One day he had to do some hard work and he returned to the inn quite tired. As he was going to sleep, he found a few beggars cooking their food at a distance. "How lucky these fellows are! They do no labour; yet they live as much as I live!"

Ramdass did not go to work any more. Instead, he went near a temple and implored the devotees to give him alms. Some gave him bits of food and some gave him coins. "Not

bad," he thought at the end of the day.

Although he earned more when he used to work, once he was given to begging, he found it more and more alluring. He chose new places and learnt various ways of attracting people's attention. Very soon he grew into an accomplished begger.

A year passed. One night he heard two men talking in subdued voices inside the inn. All others were asleep. Ramdas got curious and spied upon the two men. It did not take him long to understand that they were thieves. They were dividing the booty between themselves.

Ramdas came closer and stood behind a pillar and had a better house at the booty. There were coins and ornaments and a variety of other things. The thieves looked quite happy.

Ramdas' eyes grew rounder at the sight of the wealth. "Why not I too resort to stealing? Once I lay my hand on something valuable, I need not worry about the means of living for weeks or months!"

He began stealing. In a day or two he got enough to pull on for a month. But stealing proved so exciting that he went on practising it even when he had no need of doing so.

But one night he was caught red-handed. He got a good thrashing and was handed over to the police. After a trial he was jailed for two years.

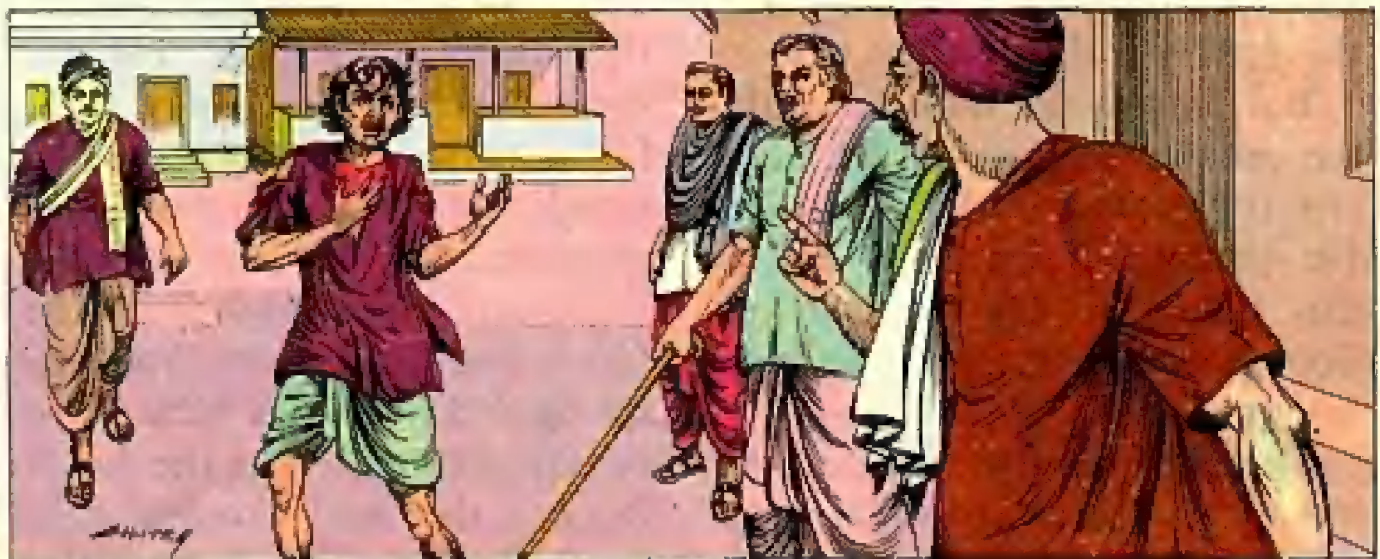
Upon his release he wished to

revert to begging. But the people of the bazar shouted at him, "In daylight you will spy upon our wealth; at night you will steal them. No alms for you!"

From begging he wanted to revert to his old practice of working for a living. "No work for a thief!" said the people closing their doors on his face.

Ramdas was reduced to a miserable condition. He left the bazar and arrived at a distant town. There he got work in a building under construction.

At the day's end, when he received money for his work, he told himself, "I had not got such satisfaction during the last three years!" He realised that though begging and stealing brought easy money, they had deprived him of happiness.





LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

UNDER THE MAGIC TREE

A man once lost his way in a forest. He climbed a tall tree in order to find the way out of the forest. But, as far as his vision went, there were trees and trees and nothing but trees.

He was afraid of wild animals. Their howls could be heard as soon as it was dark. He shivered, perched on the tree.

But, luckily for him, he could see smoke coiling up through tree-tops at a little distance. He climbed down and ran in the direction of the smoke. Soon he stood in front of a nice little hut.

The hut belonged to an old mendicant. The traveller was delighted to find a refuge for

the night. The mendicant provided the guest with delicious food and sweet drink. The traveller was puzzled. He did not know how the old mendicant could find such stuffs in that wild forest.

The night passed. The traveller was in no mood to leave the mendicant's hut. He expressed his desire to stay there for a period and to serve the mendicant. His request was granted. He fetched for the mendicant dry wood from the forest and fresh water from the spring and lit fire for him. The mendicant went into the forest twice a day and brought delicious food for his guest. But

every time he went alone. So far as he was concerned, he took nothing but a few fruits and roots.

A year passed. One day the mendicant told the man, "My son! It is time for me to depart from this forest."

"I will accompany you wherever you go," said the man.

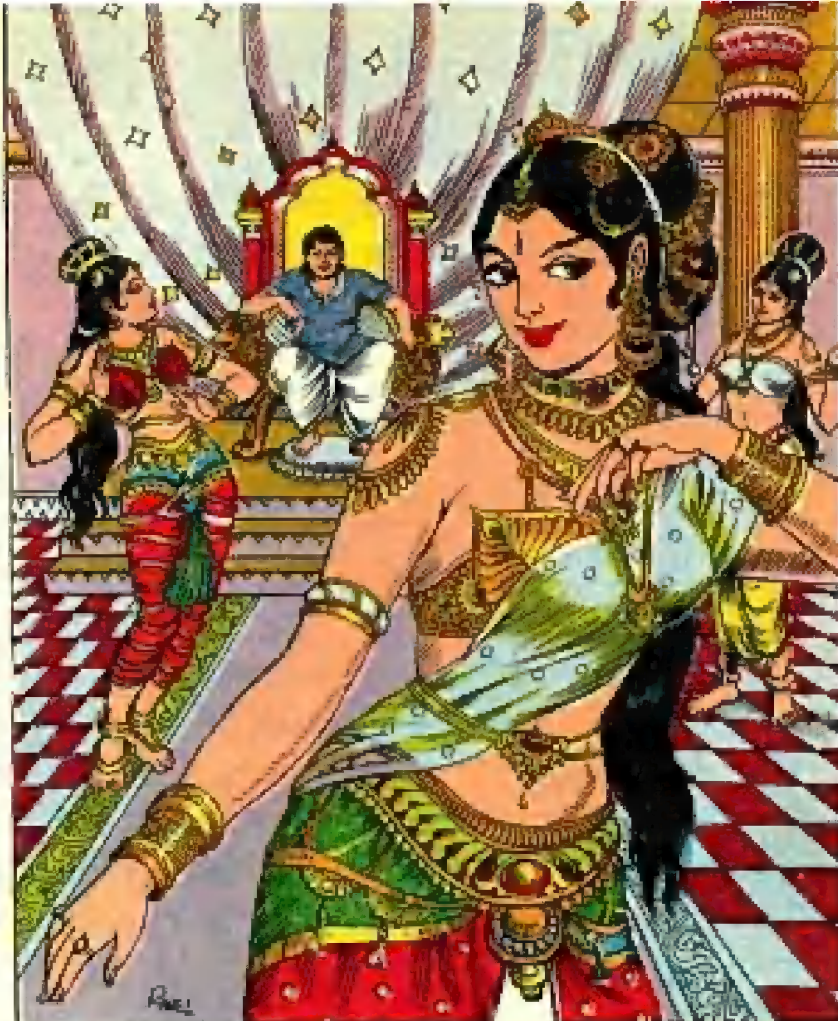
"That is not possible. I will go to the high altitudes of the Himalayas. I must go there alone. But before we part, I will like to grant you a boon. Tell me what should please you," said the mendicant.

The man thought for a while. Then he said, "Sir, before I ask you for a boon, kindly tell how you have managed to give me delicious food all these days. Where are they available?"

The mendicant smiled and replied, "Somewhere in this forest there is a wish-fulfilling tree. I just stood under it and wished to have the food. They were instantly given to me."

"Sir, now I know what boon to obtain from you. Please show me that magic tree," said the man with great excitement.

But the mendicant looked grave. "It is not a wise request, my son. One should not have access to that tree unless one



had very great control over one's thoughts and desires. You see, although I have known the tree by the virtue of my asceticism since long, I have never asked it to give anything for my own use or enjoyment."

"Please, sir, show me the tree. This is the only boon I desire to have from you," the man went on pleading with the mendicant for a long time.

"Well, then," said the mendicant in an unhappy tone, "Come with me."

He led the man to a beautiful tree that stood in an extremely dense part of the forest. The man danced with joy.

"I'm going. We are not likely to meet again," said the mendicant as he walked away. But his guest did not care to say him good-bye. He was completely taken up by the tree.

"I wish I had a chair to sit down here," the man murmured to himself. To his great joy and surprise there materialised before him the most comfortable chair one could dream of. He relaxed in it and murmured, "I had seen the king seated in such a chair, enjoying a cup of wine. I wish I had a cup like that in my hand."

Next moment he found himself holding a bejewelled cup, filled with flavoursome wine to its brink. He took a sip from it and was overjoyed.

He remembered that the kings, while in that relaxed

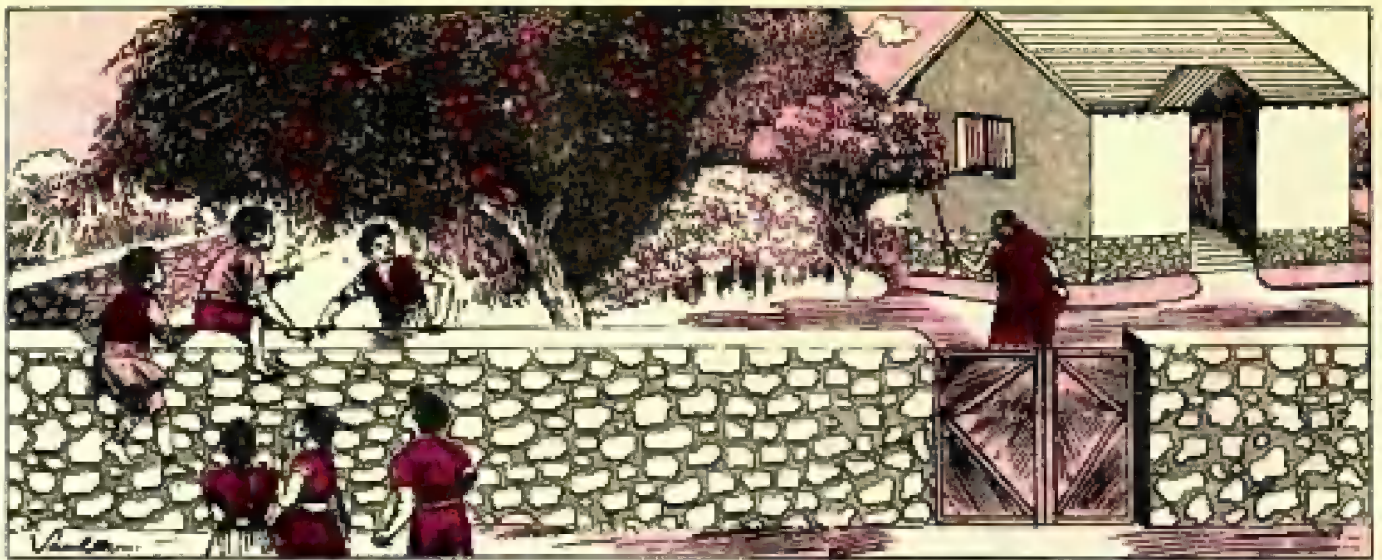
condition, were in the habit of enjoying dances before them. This had hardly come to his mind when the place vibrated with music and he saw a number of fairy-like damsels dancing before him.

He suddenly remembered that it was night and that he sat in the open, in the densest part of the forest. "What would happen if a tiger pounced upon me?" he thought.

And like a string of lightning a ferocious tiger pounced upon him and dragged him away. "Let this tiger die!" he shouted. But he was no more under the miraculous tree and hence his cry went in vain.

The tiger's roar and the man's cry were heard by the mendicant who was on his way out of forest. He sighed, but did not look back.





The World of Magic

COINS FROM APPLES!

In a certain village lived an old lady. She had enough money to lead a comfortable life. But she was such a miser that she neither ate well nor gave a paisa in charity.

In her compound stood an apple tree. Its fruits were of very good quality. The old lady—Gunawati was her name—guarded the tree most jealously. She plucked the fruits when they were ripe and sold them to the villagers or sent them to the weekly market. She never gave even one fruit free to anybody. She would not allow a child to collect even an over-ripe fruit or one pecked at by a bird which had fallen down. If a child came near the tree stealthily,

she would pelt stones at him or her.

The villagers, naturally, hated Gunawati. They believed that it was inauspicious to see her face in the morning.

Sudhir was the son of the village headman. Once on a visit to the village during the holidays in his school, he, along with a few friends, dared to climb Gunawati's apple tree. It was noon and they were under the impression that Gunawati must be enjoying a nap. But she was as alert as ever. She rushed out of her hut with a catapult and shouted, "Get off the tree immediately or I strike!"

The boys had no other go than to jump down and run



away.

This was a great blow to Sudhir's prestige. He had led the boys to the tree. He was the only boy from the village to read in the town. Yet he too proved as ineffective as anyone else in achieving the fond goal!

"I will teach her a lesson," Sudhir proclaimed before his friends. But the boys did not seem impressed. That further humiliated Sudhir.

Next day Sudhir had to return to his school hostel in the town. But he never forgot his humiliation. He tried to think out a way for revenge. But nothing occurred to him and he remai-

ned pensive.

"What is the matter with you, Sudhir?" asked Shyam, his dear friend.

"Nothing." Sudhir tried to avoid the question.

"You cannot deceive me. I have been observing you since you returned from home and you seem clearly a changed person! What has happened?" Shyam demanded.

"It is about that Gunawati..."

"I see! Who is that girl?" Shyam was surprised.

"Girl? She must be over seventy. But she can give battle to a hundred girls—and boys too," said Sudhir and narrated all that had happened.

Shyam laughed and said, "Don't you worry, Sudhir, we will teach her a lesson all right."

Magic was Shyam's hobby. He thought out a scheme and confided it to Sudhir who liked it. A month later they had a week's holiday. This time Shyam accompanied Sudhir to his village.

One morning Gunawati heard a knock on her door. She opened the door. Before her stood a mendicant and his disciple.

"I don't give alms to anybody," Gunawati shouted. But

before she closed her door again, the mendicant said, "We are not asking for alms, child! We are here at the instruction of our Himalayan guru who was also your guru in your previous birth. The guru thinks that you are fond of wealth and that your desire should be satisfied. Now, here is a parcel of sacred ash. Sprinkle it around the foot of your apple tree. In three days gold coins will grow inside the apples. We will come again and show you how to gather them."

Gunawati was surprised and delighted. She accepted the sacred ash and the strangers

went away.

Three days passed. The strangers appeared there again. This time Gunawati opened her door gladly.

The mendicant took his seat on the floor and said, "Bring a pair of apples." Gunawati produced the apples immediately. The mendicant brought out a knife from his bag. Then he recited a *mantra* and cut the fruit in two halves. Inside the fruit dazzled a gold coin! He repeated the miracle with the other apple.

"Did you see?" asked the mendicant looking at the surprised old lady. "Remember the *mantra*. Pluck all your ripe





fruits before it is dark. At night recite the *mantra* and cut all the fruits in halves. Do not be eager to collect the gold coins as long as you have not cut open all the fruits. And remember one important thing. Recite the *mantra* properly."

The mendicant and his disciple then prepared to leave. "What can I give you, O great soul? If you wait for a while, I can cook some food for you," said Gunawati.

"Do not bother, child, we hardly eat anything. However, since you will feel happy only if we take something, we better take the two coins that emerged

from the first two fruits." The mendicant picked up the coins and left, followed by his disciple.

Gunawati plucked all the ripe fruits soon after the sunset. After a hurried dinner, she sat down and began cutting the fruits one by one. Then she looked for the coins. But where were they? She examined each half of the fruits again and again. Then she sighed and said, "I must have recited the *mantra* in a wrong way."

She did not know what to do with all the fruits. They could not be sold as they were in pieces. "Let me distribute them among the village children," she decided.

In the morning she signalled to a few children who were playing on a ground near her house. They called other children. Gunawati distributed the fruits among them, to the children's great happiness. And observing their joy, she herself felt a great delight. "There is much happiness in making others happy!" she muttered to herself.

Soon some of the parents came to thank her for her kindness towards their children. She entertained them to apples too. In a few days people began to



speak of her respectfully.

"How did the coins get into the two apples?" asked Sudhir the 'disciple' to Shyam, the 'mendicant'.

"It is simple. Anyone can do the trick. I had glued two gold-enamelled coins to the handle of the knife, with wax. You could not see them because the handle was in my grip.

While cutting the apples, I managed to slip them into them. One can do this with a little practice," explained Shyam.

After a year, Shyam and Sudhir confessed their trick to old Gunawati. She was a completely changed woman by then. She laughed and said, "You did so good to me!"

—By A. C. Sorcer, Magician

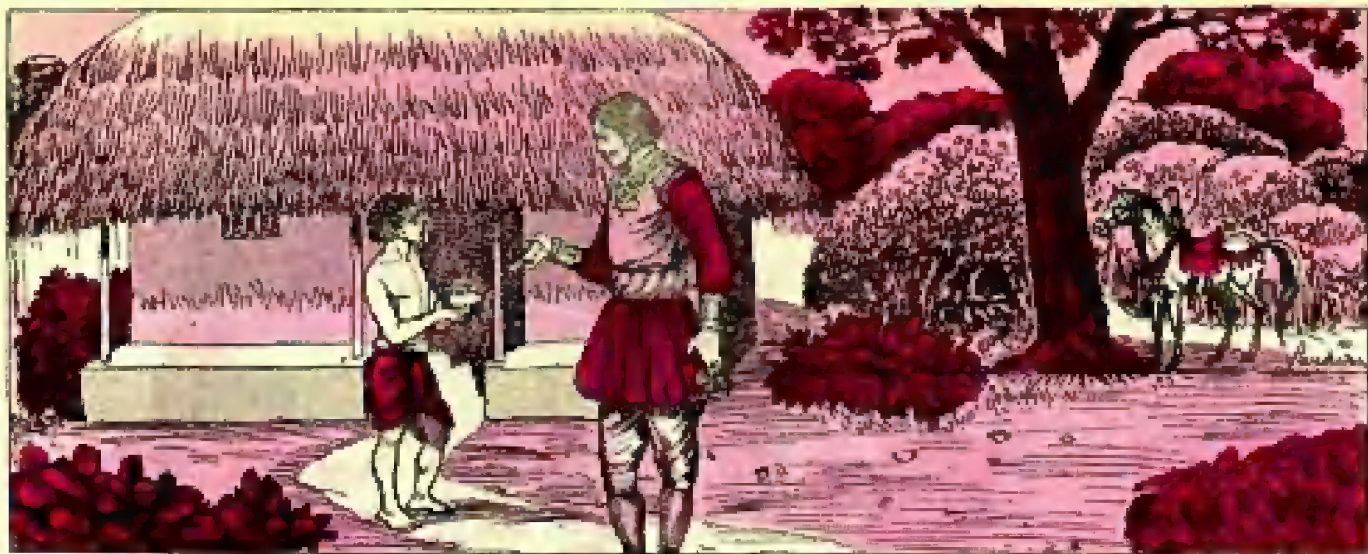
AS ILLITERATE AS EINSTEIN

The young Einstein, before he had become world-famous for his Theory of Relativity, was one day taking part in a symposium in a certain university. The discussions bored him and he slipped away into a restaurant on the other side of the road.

An old 'boy' greeted him and held out the menu before him. The young professor searched his packet for his spectacles, but remembered that he had forgotten them on the symposium dais.

"Will you please read out the menu to me?" he told the 'boy'.

The 'boy' looked at him with sympathy and whispered, "I too am as illiterate as you are!"



A BOY OF PRINCIPLES

In a certain village there was a landlord who was a kind man. Once he came across an orphan named Gokul. He allowed Gokul to live in a hut that stood on one of his farms.

"Work in this field and get whatever you need to prepare your food, from our cook," the landlord told Gokul.

A year passed. The landlord was happy to see that the farm that was left under Gokul's care yielded a variety of good vegetables.

On a certain festive day a number of people were entertained to sumptuous lunch by the landlord. Several items had been prepared from vegetables which came from the farm looked after by Gokul. But while supervising the feast, the land-

lord did not find Gokul among his employees and servants who sat for lunch. Curious, he rode to his farm and saw the door of Gokul's hut open. He got off his horse and entered the hut. Gokul was about to eat his lunch. But all he had for lunch was a few pieces of dry bread.

"Gokul! How is it that you did not join others in the feast at my house?" asked the landlord.

"You had not asked me to join, sir!" replied Gokul. The landlord understood that although poor, Gokul had a sense of dignity.

"But why are you eating only dry bread? This farm abounds in vegetables!" said the landlord.

"Sir, you had not told me that I could eat vegetables from the farm! You had asked me to take whatever I need from your cook!"

"Then, why don't you bring vegetables from the cook?"

"Sir, you had asked me to take whatever I need. I do not really need more than a little flour," replied Gokul.

The landlord was deeply impressed by Gokul's replies. "Come. We will have our lunch together," said the landlord. He took Gokul with him to his house. By then all had finished eating.

As the two sat down, the landlord said, "Do not hesitate to ask for more of the item which should taste better to you."

"I know which should taste better. It is the one made with the pumpkin," said Gokul.

"Oh no. There are items made of cabbage, cauliflower and other finer vegetables," said the landlord. But once he tasted the items, he found that Gokul was right. The item prepared with the pumpkin tasted the best.

"How did you know, even before tasting, that this one was the most tasteful of all?" he asked.

"Well, sir, we came through the hall where people had had their feast. I found that parts of other items had been left by them. But very few had left behind very little of this item," answered Gokul.

The landlord now knew that along with other virtues Gokul combined in him acumen and intelligence. He kept Gokul in his own house and admitted him into a school.





EPIC OF ADVENTURES-

Beautiful Helen, the wife of the Spartan king Menelaus, was carried away by Paris, the prince of Troy. The Greek heroes united and proceeded to seize Troy. The battle that ensued is famous as the Trojan War.

The great events of this war have been narrated in Homer's *Iliad*. Among the Greek heroes was Odysseus (the Romans call him Ulysses), the King of Ithaca. The wonderful adventures that befell him on his voyage back home are narrated in the other epic of Homer, the *Odyssey*.

The god of the sea was not at all favourable to Odysseus who braved many a storm. Once he reached an enchanted island where all his followers were turned into swine by the goddess of the island, Circe. The charm of Circe did not work upon Odysseus because he was protected by other godly powers. However, Circe loved Odysseus and she turned his followers

into human beings again.

A wild north wind and a raging tempest drove his ships towards the land of the Lotus-eaters. Some of his men ate the food of the land, honey-sweet lotus blossoms, and forgot of their home. Odysseus had to bring them back to the ship by force!

Then they reached the rocky land of Cyclops, terrible, one-eyed, demon-like creatures. They were taken captive by one such creature who began eating them, two at a time, after dashing them "to earth like helpless puppies"! Odysseus made the creature drink wine. While it lay in a sound sleep, he heated an olive staff and stuck it deep into its eye. Thereafter they craftily escaped the clutch of the furious blind Cyclops.

Then they had to negotiate their voyage through Scylla and Charybdis, two dangerous neighbour monsters. Scylla

THE ODYSSEY

sat tucked into a cave on a high rock. But her head and dangling legs and fearful hands could be seen. She picked up six men from our hero's ship, and gulped them.

On the other side, Charybdis sucked in the sea water at

regular intervals, and then vomited it forth. If a ship happened to pass by, it was swallowed by her and then tossed up!

They also passed by the island of the Sirens, who were half women and half birds. Whoever heard their sweet songs could never be able to go away from them. Odysseus sealed the ears of his men. Though he kept his own ears open, he bound himself to the mast so that he could not take the ship to the island of the Sirens when he heard their alluring song.

Through such adventures Odysseus at last reached his home. By then he had lost all his men. Disguised as a beggar he saw his dear wife Penelope harassed by suitors who claimed her hand in marriage, saying that her husband was dead!

Odysseus killed them in one sweep and was united with his wife and son whom he had left for over two decades!





EARNING ON THE WAY

Shombhudas was a tout. When a quarrel would break out between two parties in his area, he would secretly instigate one against the other and would receive money for his advice from both the parties.

One day he was on his way to another village. He knew that two brothers had fallen apart there and it was an opportunity for him to swindle both.

It was a lonely road. Shombhudas saw a trader walking ahead of him with a tinful of ghee on his head. He also saw another villager walking behind him. He thought for a moment and called the villager to his side and whispered to him, "Do you see that trader with the ghee tin? If you muster a little courage it can be yours."

"How?" asked the surprised villager.

"Just take it away from him by force. He will go and complain to the headman of the next village. I will then say that I saw him trying to snatch the tin off your head! The judgment will go in your favour. You can give me only two rupees for my help. The entire tin will be yours which you can sell for twenty rupees!"

The villager found the advice quite tempting. He bounded at the trader and gave a pull to the tin. "What is the matter with you?" demanded the trader.

"Why! This is mine!" replied the villager as he stripped the trader of his property.

"I will complain before the headman of the village ahead,"

threatened the trader.

"I don't care," said the villager.

As soon as they entered the village the trader told two passers-by his grievance. They compelled the villager to go to the headman. Before the headman the trader stated what had truly happened. But the villager said, "I was carrying the ghee to my daughter's house when this man came and snatched it away from my head!"

"Is it not you who snatched it away from me?" demanded the trader.

"I wish someone were present when you two fought over the

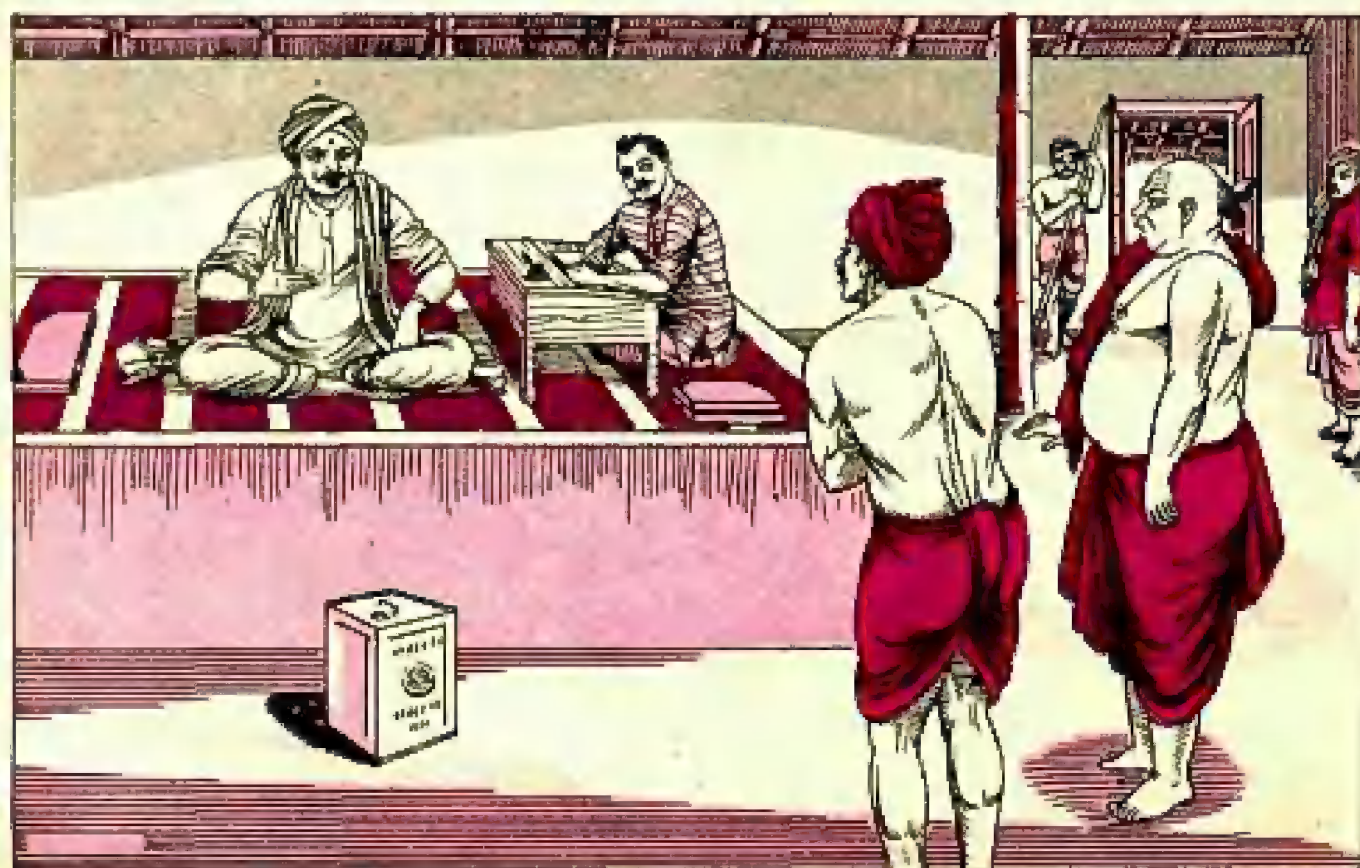
tin," observed the headman.

"Well, sir, there was a gentlemanly traveller who saw us quarrelling. Let me try to find him out," said the villager. He then ran into the street and soon returned with Shombhudas.

To the headman's question, Shombhudas replied, "Sir! This villager was walking ahead of me carrying the tin on his head. I saw this trader pacing up to him and taking away his tin forcibly."

"Thank you. Let the villager take the tin," said the headman.

The happy villager went away with the tin, followed by Shombhudas. The trader under-



stood that both had conspired to deprive him of his property and he too followed them. He soon saw the villager passing two rupees to Shombhudadas.

The trader came closer to Shombhudadas and said, "You should have been a little more clever. This pure ghee should fetch the villager at least thirty rupees whereas for all your labour you received only two rupees!"

Shombhudadas looked pale. But the trader gave him a pat on his back and said, "It is not quite late. You can now do what the villager had done to me. Go and strip him of the tin. Before the headman of the next village I will say that it was your property. For my help you give me five rupees, but in advance."

Shombhudadas found that there was nothing wrong in trying out the trader's suggestion. He gave the trader five rupees and shouted at the villager, "Stop! You have taken much pain already. Now return my tin to me!"

The villager refused to stop. Shombhudadas ran up to him and tried to take away the tin. The angry villager wanted to give him a good lesson. So he kept the tin down and gave a blow to Shombhudadas. Both wrestled and rolled on the road, shouting abuses at each other. The trader picked up the tin and boarded a horse-carriage which was heading towards the market. "I have earned five rupees on the way. I can afford to spend a rupee for travelling by the carriage," he told himself with a chuckle.





*New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire*

ONE WHO REVIVED THE DEAD

King Vikram climbed the tree again and brought down the corpse. The night was dark and sharp wind continued to torment him. Jackals howled and weird laughter of ghosts could be heard from all directions.

As the king began to walk, the vampire that possessed the corpse observed, "I should not be surprised if you are taking these pains for the sake of others and not for yourself or for your dear ones, for, I know the story of Madhav. Let me narrate it to you, O King. Your attention diverted to the story, you should feel light with your burden."

The vampire went on narrating: On the bank of the river Yamuna was a prosperous village. The landlord of the village had a son named Madhav.

Being an only child, Madhav had his own way in everything. The parents were extremely indulgent to him.

Madhav was intelligent, but he was ambitious and hasty. When he grew up to be a young



man, he told his parents, "What fun is there living in a village? There are great comfort and means of joy in the town. Let us go and settle down there."

Madhav's elderly parents did not like this idea. But lest the son should feel frustrated, they agreed to go over to the town. Accordingly, they sold away their estates and the house and left the village.

They bought a nice house in the town. Madhav decided to open a big shop where customers should be able to get almost everything they might need for their households. He went to distant cities and bought wares in large quantity and stored

them in his house.

But, unfortunately, one night the house caught fire and was reduced to ashes. His parents died in the mishap. It was so sudden that Madhav remained confounded for a long time.

When he recovered from the shock, he found himself reduced to a beggar. In the town there was nobody to give him even a little consolation, what to speak of any help. After a day or two he decided to put an end to his life.

At midnight he went near a lake. He planned to drown himself. But as he was about to jump, he heard a commanding voice, "Stop!"

He looked in the direction of the command and saw a mendicant seated under a tree. He approached the mendicant and asked, "Why did you stop me?"

"You could not have died even if I had not stopped you. You are destined to live a hundred years!" said the mendicant.

"What! I have to suffer for a hundred years? I cannot bear even a day more of this miserable life! What should I do?" Madhav asked with agony.

"My son! You are not disgusted with your life, but only

with the misery which has befallen you suddenly. Will you not like to live if you get rich again?" asked the mendicant.

"I will. But how to get rich again?"

"You can give away days from your own life to dead ones. They will live again. Although your life will be shortened, you will get rich," said the mendicant.

The mendicant then taught Mahdavi a brief *mantra*. Madhav left for the city in the morning.

The richest merchant of the city had died that day. Madhav appeared on the scene and told the dead merchant's son, "I can breathe life into your father. How much will you pay me for the miracle?"

The merchant's son was about to dismiss Madhav as a madcap. But on second thought he said, "I will give you one lakh gold mohurs!"

Madhav recited his *mantra* into the dead man's ear and whispered "I give you a year from my life." Lo and behold! The merchant sat up alive.

Madhav received the reward and returned to the town. He rebuilt his destroyed house. But soon people came to know about the miraculous power he posses-



sed. Wealthy people brought the corpses of their relatives to him in palanquins and carts and begged of him to revive them to life. Madhav was happy to receive huge sums of money from them. However, he had grown clever. He did not give more than a month of his own life to anybody.

A little later he married. He did no other business except selling days from his own life to the dead ones. People went away happy with their dead back to life. They did not know that their happiness was to be short-lived, for Madhav gave each one only a month.

He had hardly been married

for two years when his wife suddenly died. People of the town expected that he will restore her to life. But he did nothing of the sort. He quietly sat by the side of the deadbody for some time and then arranged for its cremation. Thereafter he left his house and all the wealth and walked towards the forest, never to be seen again.

The vampire paused for a moment and then asked, "O King, what is the explanation for such strange conduct of Madhav? Why did he not revive his dead wife? Why did he go away to the forest, leaving all his wealth behind? Speak out, O King! If you know the answers and yet keep quiet, your head will be shattered to pieces!"

Answered King Vikram, "Madhav had realised that while

on one hand he was going on accumulating wealth, on the other hand he was shortening his life, thereby depriving himself of the opportunity of enjoying the wealth. This was a strange situation. He had grown vexed with it.

He knew that he had only a few more years to live. He desired to devote that much of his time to the pursuit of peace. But he also knew that wherever he went people would follow him there with their dead ones. As he did not revive his wife, people concluded that he had lost his miraculous power. So nobody followed him when he left his house."

The vampire gave King Vikram the slip as soon as he finished giving his answer. The king sighed, but turned to go to the tree again, braving the rain and the bitter wind.





As Prahasta, Ravana's general, rushed at the Vanaras, followed by some of his ablest lieutenants, the Vanara heroes, Dwividha, Durmukh and Tar, faced him bravely. Jambavan too jumped forward carrying a huge rock on his head as his weapon. Before Prahasta could show his battlecraft, his lieutenants, Naranataka, Samunnata, Mahanada and Kumbahana fell to the terrible attack by the Vanara heroes.

This infuriated Prahasta as nothing else had done. He drove his chariot into the ranks of the Vanaras like a thunderbolt and killed a large number of them. Seeing his spirited attack, Neel jumped forward

and confronted him. A terrible battle followed. Neel uprooted a rock and with it smashed Prahasta's chariot. Prahasta challenged Neel standing on the ground. Both were locked in a ferocious battle. Prahasta then separated for a moment and picked up his bow. But before he could fix an arrow to it, Neel brought down another rock on his head. Prahasta fell flat after giving out a piercing cry.

His soldiers ran away crying and gave the news of their general's death to Ravana. The news drove Ravana to fury and despair. He decided to march to the battlefield himself. A strong chariot with suitable horses had already been kept



ready. Ravana was seen emerging from the gateway of the fort before long, followed by a regiment of demon-heroes.

Standing at some distance, Rama asked Vibhisana, "Who are these now coming out to face us?" Vibhisana pointed out Akampana and Meghnad, the sons of Ravana, and other heroes such as Atikaya and Mahodara, Pishacha, Trishura, Kumbha and Nikumbha, apart from Ravana.

Rama agreed that Ravana was a personality to reckon with. The valour he radiated was rarely to be seen among the gods.

Rama was happy that at last

he was getting the opportunity to wreck his vengeance on the wicked kidnapper of Sita. He and Lakshmana stood ready to challenge Ravana.

Suddenly Sugriva came out to the forefront and checked Ravana from advancing. But the very next moment an arrow discharged by Ravana threw Sugriva flat on the ground. The demons gave a lusty cheer to Ravana.

The Vanara warriors like Gavaksha, Gavaya, Rishabha, Jyotirmukha and Nabha made an instant dash into Ravana's regiment. But Ravana harassed them with a shower of arrows.

Rama now came forward to protect his lieutenants. But Lakshmana implored Rama to be given the chance to fight Ravana. Rama allowed him to go ahead after advising him to be on his guard.

Lakshmana advanced to meet Ravana. But before that Hanuman appeared near the demon-king and told him, "Ravana, you might have achieved immunity from the gods, your fellow demons, and gandharvas, by the virtue of a boon. But remember that you are not immune to any attack from the Vanaras. I am now

going to finish you with a blow."

"Very well, Hanuman, you are welcome to plant a blow on me so that the posterity will remember you as the Vanara who had given a blow to the mighty Ravana. Thereafter I will kill you," said Ravana.

"Do not forget, Ravana, that your son Aksha fell to my blow!" Hanuman reminded the demon-king.

Ravana suddenly planted a blow on Hanuman's chest. But Hanuman did not lose his balance. Instead, he returned the blow with great fury. Ravana shook visibly and that delighted Vanaras. They broke into a roar.

Ravana acknowledged the fact that Hanuman was indeed very strong! But far from feeling flattered, Hanuman replied, "Of what worth is my strength if you could survive my blow? Better give me a blow again. That will infuriate me further and I will send you to hell without any delay."

Ravana gave a blow as soon as Hanuman had said this. Hanuman stood dazed for a second and then managed to raise his hand aiming at Ravana. But Ravana had diverted his chariot to face Neela.



Hanuman took a leap and stood before Ravana again and demanded, "How is it that you ran away from me before our combat ended?"

In the meanwhile a rock Neel had thrown was about to fall on Ravana. But he sent an arrow which smashed the rock to pieces. Next, his fire-arrow hit Neel who fell senseless.

Ravana then found himself face to face with Lakshmana. "Your last hour has come. That is why you are here before me," Ravana shouted at Lakshmana.

"A true hero seldom boasts as you are doing. There need be no delay for our trial of



strength," replied Lakshmana.

There ensued a rapid exchange of arrows between the two. For long did Lakshmana stand unhurt, continuing to harass the demon-king. But at last he swooned away. Ravana bent down to pick him up in order to take him into his fort. But his effort was foiled by Hanuman who gave him a terrible blow just in time. Ravana lost his consciousness. Blood oozed out of his mouth, nostrils and eyes.

Hanuman lifted Lakshmana and carried him to Rama. In a short time both Lakshmana and Ravana came back to sense. Ravana got ready to launch a

fresh attack.

This time Rama advanced to face him. Hanuman pleaded with him to sit on his shoulder. Rama obliged him.

As Ravana saw Rama, seated on Hanuman, approaching him, he shot an arrow at Hanuman. This provoked Rama to shoot a number of powerful arrows at once. They destroyed Ravana's chariot, his standard, his horses as well as his charioteer. One of the arrows hit Ravana on his chest. He was toppled from his ruined chariot. His bow fell away from his slackened hand. Rama then sent yet another arrow which cracked his helmet and separated it from his head.

"Ravana! You are tired. I allow you leave to go home and have some rest. Come out when you have sufficiently recouped your lost vigour. Now, begone!"

Ravana felt awfully ashamed. But he had no other go than to retreat. Rama and Lakshmana then entered their camp to take care of their wounded soldiers.

Inside the fort, a depressed Ravana told his near ones, "I who had defeated Indra, the king of gods, am now defeated in the hands of a mere human

being. It was a pity that when I obtained the boon from Brahma ensuring immunity from several kinds of beings, I did not care to mention of the human beings as I could not have dreamed of any danger from them. But it is no use lamenting over my folly now. Lanka must be protected. Go and wake up Kumbakarna.

Kumbakarna had gone to sleep a few days before the war began. As he slept for six months at a stretch, it was necessary to wake him up untimely.

A number of demons proceeded to wake up the mighty Kumbakarna, carrying with them sackfuls of food and flowers and sandalwood paste etc. to appease him.

Kumbakarna lay asleep like a hill in a large hall. The demons had to approach him cautiously, for, when he breathed out, whoever was before his nostrils was blown away like a feather before a terrible wind.

The demons arranged the food and the drink in an array near Kumbakarna's mouth. Then they blew conch-shells and bugles and beat drums and shouted their utmost. But the effort yielded no result.



The demons then brought maces and with them applied blows on the sleeping Kumbakarna. Even that went in vain. Then they drove in a horde of elephants. The elephants trumpeted and climbed over Kumbakarna's body. Only then did he open his red eyes.

He sat up and looked pleased at the sight of the food and drink arranged before him. Without a word he first finished them. Then, looking at the demons, he asked, "Why did you wake me up? I hope, no harm has befallen Ravana!"

Yupaksha, a trusted minister of Ravana, came forward and said, "O Kumbakarna! We are



indeed in the midst of a dangerous situation. What gods or gandharvas had failed to do, has been done by human beings. They have seized Lanka by the help of their Vanara army. In the first round of his battle with Rama, the leader of the invaders, our King Ravana was obliged to retreat."

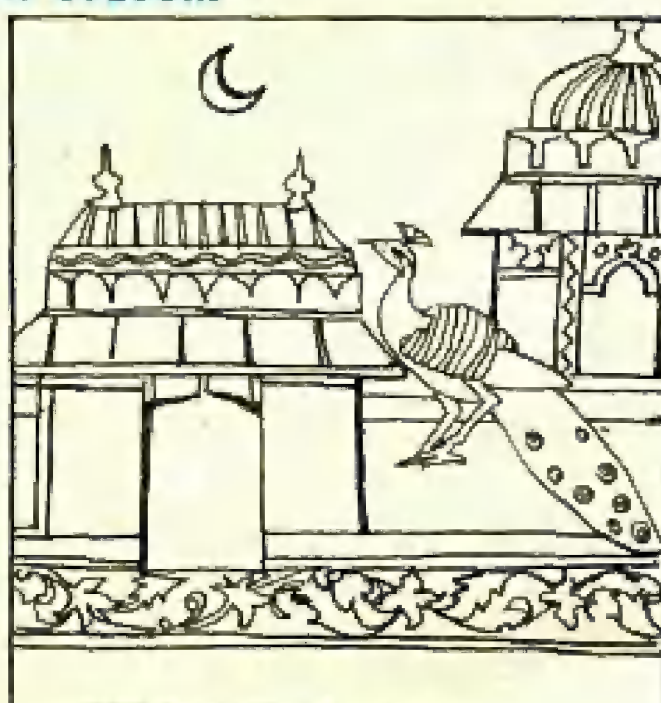
Kumbhakarna looked red with

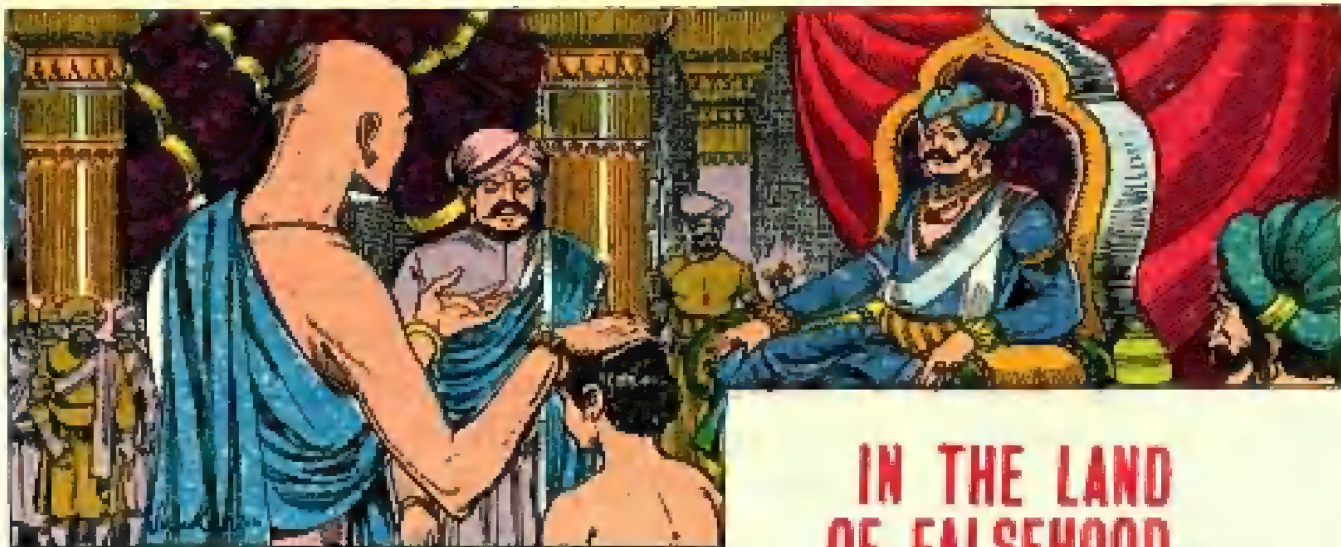
agitation. "Let me go out and destroy the Vanaras!" he shouted angrily, "Let me drink the blood of Rama!"

But Mahodara appealed to him with folded hands, "Before you go to the battlefield, be pleased to meet Ravana. A discussion with him should make your mission easy."

Contd.

WONDER WITH COLOURS





IN THE LAND OF FALSEHOOD

Long long ago, a Brahmin who had lost his wife and had nobody in the world save a son, set out on a tour of the wide world.

Father and son walked during the day, taking rest under trees or sheds from time to time, and spending their nights in some village or the other. People gave them shelter and food, for, the Brahmin could impress almost everybody by his scholarship.

Once a certain king was so much pleased with him that he made him the gift of a piece of diamond. The Brahmin was happy. He decided that after his wandering was over, he would settle down in his village again.

But he had reached a new land. He thought that he could very well see the land before

beginning the return journey. "It will not be proper for me to move about with the diamond in this unknown land. It might get lost or stolen," he thought. He went to a rich merchant and deposited the diamond with him.

After his wandering was over, he met the merchant again and wanted his diamond back. But the merchant flatly denied having kept any diamond.

The Brahmin complained to the king of the land about the merchant's conduct. The king summoned the merchant. But he stuck on to his denial.

"Had you really deposited the diamond with the merchant?" the king asked the Brahmin.

"I had. I speak the truth, placing my hand on my son's head," said the Brahmin.

But as soon as he said this

placing his hand on his son's head, the son fell down on the floor. The court physician declared him dead.

The king and the merchant laughed. The Brahmin carried the boy's dead body to the cremation ground. There he broke down and kept on crying.

A yogi who was disguised as a beggar came near him and asked him what had happened. The Brahmin told him everything and said, "I don't understand why my son should die when I spoke the truth!"

"My son," answered the yogi, "this is the land of falsehood. Nobody has any regard for an iota of truth here. The evil beings of falsehood reign supreme here. They were angry because you spoke the truth and they took revenge on you by striking your son sense-

less. Your son is not really dead. You go back to the king and do as I say."

The yogi briefed the Brahmin what to do and followed him. The Brahmin met the king again and said placing his hand on his son's head, "My lord, I had lied when I said that I had deposited one piece of diamond with the merchant. In fact, I had deposited a dozen diamonds with him!"

No sooner had he said this than his son sprang to life. The beings of falsehood, it seems, were quite happy.

The king looked perplexed. Only then the yogi explained to the king everything and advised him to try to change the climate of his land. The king rewarded the Brahmin and punished the merchant and devoted himself to a battle against falsehood.





KING OF THE DESERT!

As Rangu grew up, he not only proved a good-for-nothing boy, but also wicked and lazy. His old grandmother who worked hard to maintain herself and Rangu soon grew tired of him.

"Now that you are a grown up lad, you must work if you desire to be fed," the granny one day told Rangu.

"I am a clever boy. Why should I work as long as you are there?" blurted out Rangu.

"In that case, my clever boy, I am not going to feed you!" retorted the old woman.

Rangu took it as a joke and did not bother about it. But he could not do so for long.

She did not cook at night. Both went to sleep without dinner. The old woman was not

seen doing anything to arrange for food in the morning either. Rangu now realised that he could stay at home only if he was prepared to starve.

He tried to be brave. He did not complain. But as hours passed, he knew that the situation was becoming impossible.

He left home and walked straight, not knowing where to go. When it was evening he found himself inside a forest. He climbed a tree and perched on a branch. He decided to spend the night there.

On the same tree dwelt a ghost. Its sister, another ghost, had been imprisoned in a bottle by an exorcist and the bottle lay buried at the foot of the tree.



It was not possible for the ghost to dig out the bottle and free its sister. Now that it saw Rangu, it said, "Under the tree is buried gold. If one is clever, he should dig the wealth out!"

Rangu did not care to look up at the speaker. But he said, "I am a clever boy and I must dig out the wealth."

He then hopped down and tried to part the earth at the foot of the tree. But the earth proved quite hard. He worked for an hour. But his fingers pained and he felt obliged to give up.

"I need a spade or a crowbar for digging," he said.

"If you are really clever, you should be able to find one," replied the ghost.

Rangu looked here and there and saw a beam of light coming from a hut. He ran there and entered the hut. A wandering couple from the hills sat inside, cooking their food. Rangu asked them if they could lend him any instrument for digging.

The couple did not understand what Rangu said. But they showed him the way to a spot where a mendicant lived.

Rangu ran to the mendicant and told him what his need was. The mendicant happened to be a sage with great powers. He was in a happy mood then. He not only gave Rangu a crowbar, but also told him, "Whenever you will remember me and ask for a boon it will be granted to you. But it will be for once only."

Rangu ran back to the tree and began digging the earth. Soon the buried bottle emerged. With great joy Rangu picked up the bottle, but could not see its content in the darkness.

"Please dash the bottle on the ground," said the ghost. Rangu did as asked. With an eerie shriek the ghost's sister flew up to join its brother.

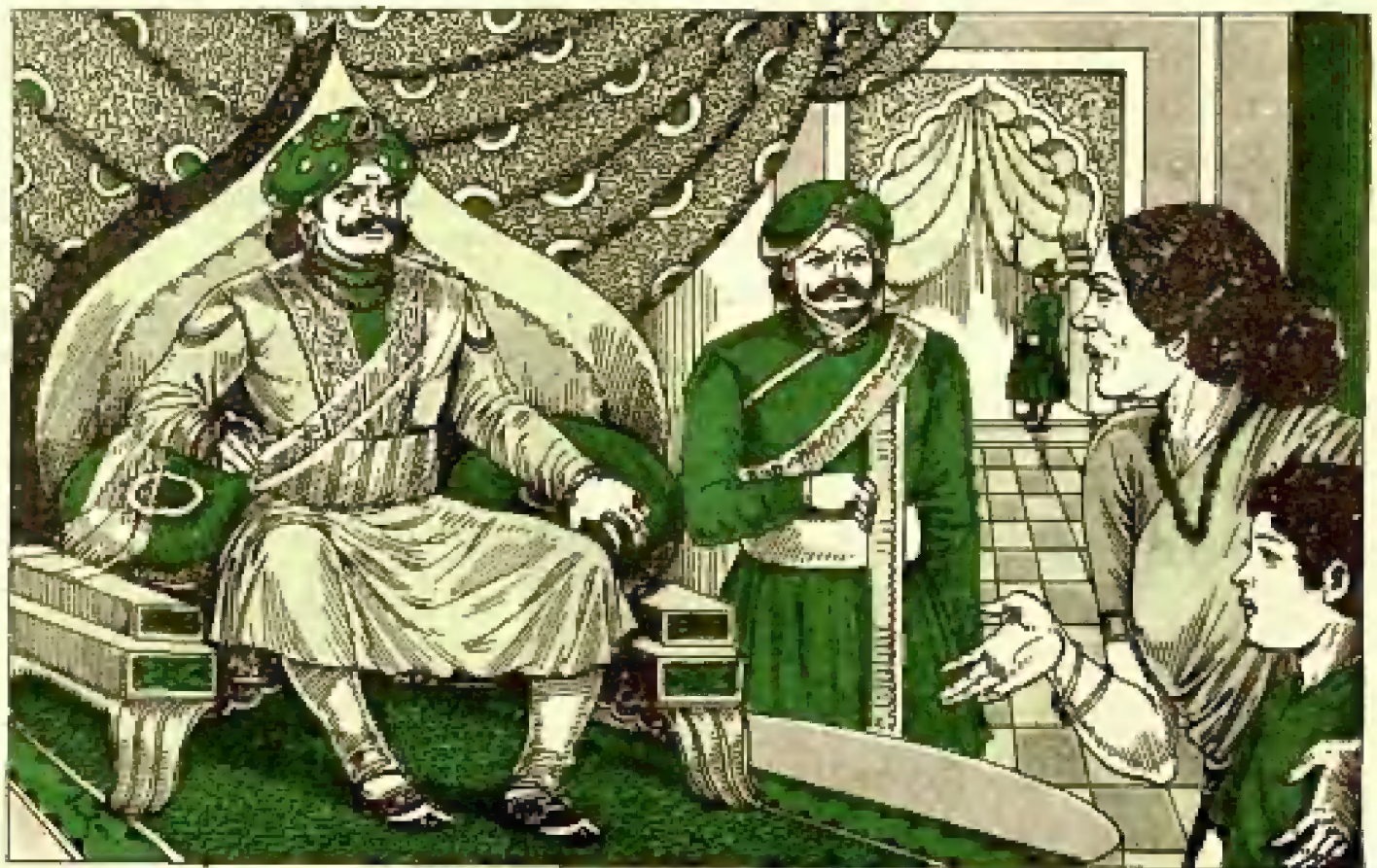
"I heard a shriek. But where is the gold?" asked Rangu.

There was no reply. By then it had started raining. Rangu thought that it was because of the rain that he could see neither the gold nor the fellow who made him dig the earth. He remembered of the promised boon and said, "Let there be no rain in a country where I live!"

The rain instantly stopped. But Rangu found no gold. Awfully hungry and tired, he now headed towards home. The fond grandmother was feeling much worried on account of him. She continued to feed him as of old.

"Granny! I am no ordinary man. There will be no rain in a country where I live!" Rangu proudly announced. The old woman at first took it as yet another vain and stupid claim of the boy. But as days passed, it seemed to her that Rangu's claim was true. In the rainy season the neighbouring lands received plenty of rain, but not a drop fell on their country.

The drought resulted in famine. There was no improvement in the condition the next year. The people and the king had no end to their worry. A wicked king of the neighbourhood prepared to invade the



land taking advantage of its unfortunate condition.

The grandmother at last led Rangu to the king's presence and said, "O King, I will tell you the cause of the drought only if you promise that this foolish lad's life will be spared."

The king made the necessary promise and the old woman told him all that had happened.

"What is to be done now? As long as this boy is alive we will have no rain. But we cannot kill him as I have already promised to spare his life!" the king said pensively looking at the minister.

"My lord! This boy can do for us what an army cannot do. The neighbouring king is plotting to invade our kingdom. Let Rangu go and live in that kingdom. In two years the kingdom will experience the

worst famine and it will be easy for us to conquer it," counselled the minister.

The idea drove the king into ecstasy. Rangu was sent into the next country where he lived happily, patronised by his own king. The country received no rain and as expected, in two years Rangu's king conquered it.

"What should we do with Rangu now?" the king asked his minister.

"Beyond the northern border of our country is the desert which is no man's land. Let us build a house for Rangu there and declare the desert to be Rangu's own kingdom," said the minister. Rangu was thus provided with a nice house in the desert. Whatever he needed was sent from the palace. He lived quite happily, as the king of the desert.





THE PILL AGAINST HUNGER!

There was a king who never came out of his ivory tower. He passed his time eating, drinking, merrymaking and sleeping. The administration was carried on by his old minister.

The people hardly saw their King. The king too hardly saw his subjects. Thus passed the days.

The minister, no doubt, was an able administrator and a wise man. But with an idle king as one's master, how much good could one do for the people? The minister worried much on account of the king's habits.

One day the minister told the king, "My lord! The country is threatened by a famine. What is to be done?"

"Summon all the physicians of my kingdom at once," ordered the king.

The physicians were duly summoned. The king told them, "I want you to prepare some such medicine which should cure the people of their hunger."

After a long silence, the leading physician said, "My lord! Our ancient lores do not prescribe any medicine against hunger. It will not be possible for us to prepare such a medicine."

The king got angry and ordered the physicians to be thrown into jail. The order was carried out.

In the evening the minister met the king and said that the physicians have agreed to

prepare the desired medicine within a month. Hence the king may be pleased to free them.

The king was happy. The physicians were set free. Before the month passed sackfuls of pills were produced before the king.

"My lord! If one takes one pill, he will not feel hungry for five years," said the leading physician.

"That is nice. Call all the people here. I will distribute the pills myself," said the king.

From the next day the king began to distribute the pills. After a fortnight the king was satisfied that all his subjects

had been immuned to hunger. However, he did not take the pill himself because he enjoyed good food. And as he did not take the pill himself, he could not ask other inmates of his palace to take the pill either.

"What is the condition of our kingdom now?" the king one day asked the minister. He was sure of getting a very rosy picture of the situation.

But the minister looked grave and said, "My lord, the situation is far from satisfactory, I am sorry to say!"

"What makes you say so?" asked the surprised king.

"The people have almost cea-



sed to work. They pass their time playing, gossiping, or quarreling and fighting. Because they do not feel hungry, they do not care to produce anything," explained the minister.

"But hunger was the main problem and that is solved, isn't that so?" asked the king.

"True, my lord, but as people do not produce, everything except the foodstuffs has become extremely costly and rare. Besides, your subjects have become unruly. They refuse to pay tax and they defy our officers," reported the minister. The king turned gloomy.

Some time later the minister

one day came running to the king and said, "My lord! Our neighbour, King Sursen, is invading our country."

"Array our soldiers immediately. I will command them to defend the country," said the king anxiously.

"Where are our soldiers, my lord? As they do not feel hungry, they do not care to earn. Most of them have gone away to their homes," reported the king.

"What are we to do then?" asked the pensive king.

"Let me go and meet the invading king. I will try to appease him by accepting his



suzerainty over us," said the minister.

The minister went away. A little later an elderly man, followed by some armed men, came marching to the king's presence. The king looked around and found nobody to defend him. All had gone out to see what was happening outside the palace.

The elderly man stepped forward and said in a commanding tone, "I am the minister of King Sursen. I am to inform you that your kingdom has fallen to us and you are our prisoner."

"All this is due to the pill that cured hunger," muttered the king lowering his head. He then broke down.

"No, O King, all this is due to your idleness. You never thought about the consequence of your actions, nor did you

ever go out of your palace to see the situation for yourself," said the elderly man.

"I have realised my folly, though so late," said the king.

"It is not very late, my lord," said a voice which now sounded familiar. The king raised his head. The elderly man instantly took off his disguise. He was no other than his own minister!

"Pardon me, my lord! I had to enact this drama for your good alone. The pills you distributed have not taken away the people's hunger. Everything is going on all right. But things could be much better if you, as the king, took real interest in the welfare of the people," said the minister.

The king's delusions had been shattered. He became wise and practical.

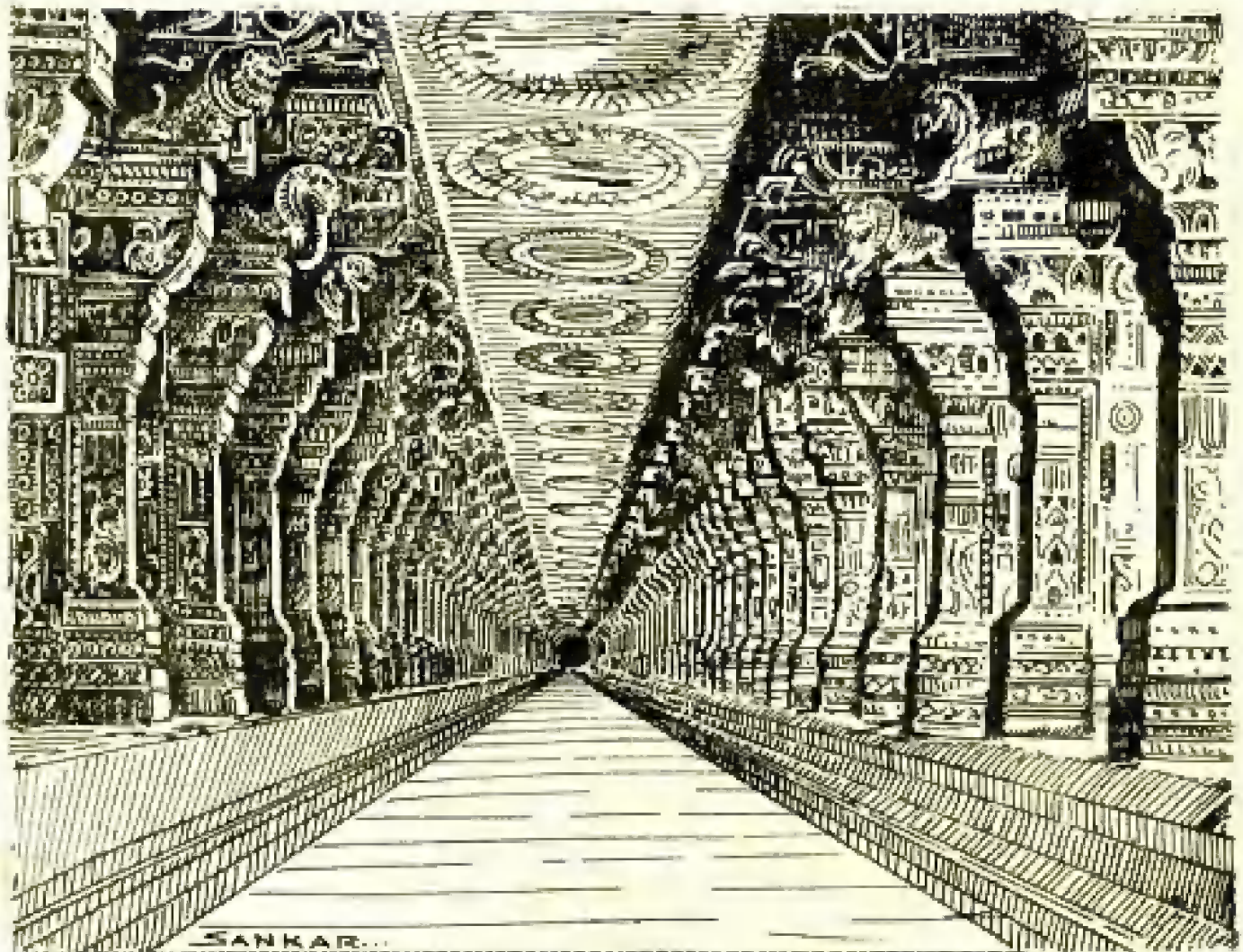


THE TEMPLE OF RAMESHWARAM

Rameshwaram, an island at the south-eastern extreme of India, in Palk Straits, is one of the most sacred spots in the land. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, the temple here is a grand example of the famous Dravidian style of art, sculpture and architecture.

Ravana, the demon-king of Lanka, is believed to have worshipped Lord Shiva here. Subsequently Rama too paid his homage to the deity who became known as Ramanathaswamy

The quadrangular temple, 650 ft., by 1,000 ft. has vast pillared corridors, 4,000 ft. long.





HIP! HIP! HURRAH!

Hip is the fruit of a certain kind of rose; *hip*, again, means the haunch of the thigh; *hip* is also an old word for hypochondria; people often call a hippy, *hip*. But, needless to say, none of these meanings hold good when it come to *Hip! Hip! Hurrah!*

Perhaps all of us have shouted *Hip! Hip! Hurrah!* (or *Hip-hip-hurrah*) at one time or the other. It is an exclamation to express our collective cheer. But how did it originate?

A legend says that a group of German knights once invaded Jerusalem in order to vent their anger against the Jews. That was in the Middle Ages. They shouted *Hierosolyma est perdita* or "Jerusalem is destroyed". But when more inspired, they took only *Hi* from the first word and *p* from the last and shouted *Hip! Hip!*

A little later another word, *Hurrah*, which meant "To paradise", was added. What the jolly knights intended to convey was that by destroying Jerusalem they had ensured their right to paradise!





LET US KNOW

Recently I read a newspaper mentioning a phrase, *The Egyptian Cuase*. Can you kindly shed light on it?

Dr. SURENDRA MOHAN DAS. *Cuttack.*

You might have read the phrase either in connection with the mummy of a pharaoh being treated in Paris against decay or the exhibition of some finds from the tomb of Tutankhamen presently being held in America.

The tombs of the ancient monarchs of Egypt, the Pharaohs, mostly situated in an area famous as the Valley of the Kings, bear the warning that their desecraters shall be doomed. It was strongly believed that this was not a vain threat, but a curse which went strong through thousands of years.

Despite the warning, over the years thieves broke into the tombs and stole away immensely valuable things which were stored within. However, one tomb, which had escaped the thieves, was discovered by a British archaeologist Howard Carter, in 1922. This was the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamen, who sat on the throne 3,337 years ago and died still a teen-ager.

At the time of the discovery, inside the underground room of the sepulchre, Lord Carnarvon, the financier of the excavation, was stung by a poisonous mosquito. It stung him exactly on that spot of his body where the Pharaoh's body showed a wound. Lord Carnarvon died in a Cairo hotel after a few days.

Within a short period thereafter, six more people connected with the excavation died under different circumstances, which many viewed as mysterious. The rumour that the Pharaoh's curse was at work became widespread. In 1939, the sound of Tutankhamen's War trumpets were broadcast by the B.B.C. The same year the World War II broke out and the believers in the Egyptian Curse got yet another support.

But all told, there is no reason to think that these were not simple coincidences.

Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.

CHOOSE A TITLE AND WIN A REWARD

You are invited to choose a title for the following story and write it down on a post card and mail it to 'Story-title Contest', Chandamama, 2 & 3, Arcot Road, Madras 600 026, to reach us by the 20th of February. A reward of Rs. 25.00 will go to the best entry, which will be published in the March issue. Please do not use the same card for entering the photo caption contest.



There was a man who lost all his property in gambling. Laughed at by the people of his town, he left his home and wandered here and there like a beggar.

After a year he entered a forest. It was night. He sought shelter in the hut of a hermit. It was granted.

In the morning the hermit recognised the beggar to be his childhood friend. When the hermit heard all about the friend's misfortune, he took pity on him and asked, "How can your condition improve?"

"If I get a lump of gold," said the beggar.

The mendicant pointed his finger at a boulder. At once it turned into gold. "Take it," he said.

The beggar's eyes glittered. But he hesitated for a moment. "Have you to say something more?" asked the hermit.

"Yes, if I could get a little more gold...."

The mendicant pointed his finger at a passing elephant. It turned into a statue of gold.

"Take it. Do you wish to say anything more?" asked the hermit.

"Yes, I wonder if you could give me that finger of yours....." fumbled out the hopefull beggar.

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. Devidas Kasbekar



Mr. J. S. Parakk

- These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, or several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.
- Rs. 20 will be awarded as prize for the best caption. Remember, your entry must reach us by 20th FEBRUARY.
- Winning captions will be announced in APRIL Issue.
- Write your entry on a POST CARD, specify the month, give your full name address, age and post to:

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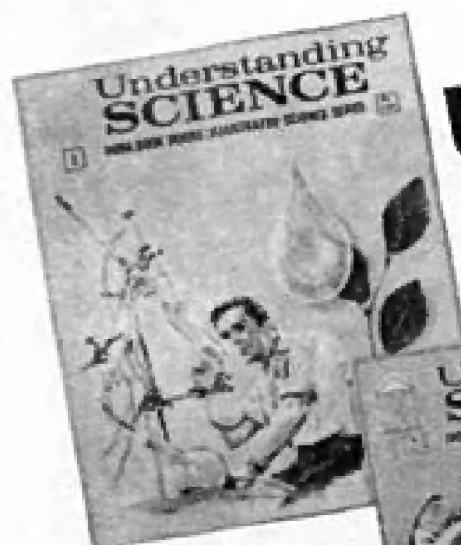
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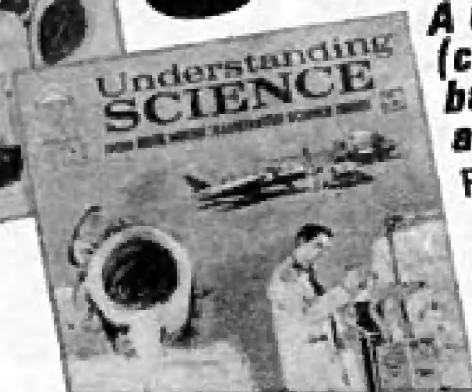


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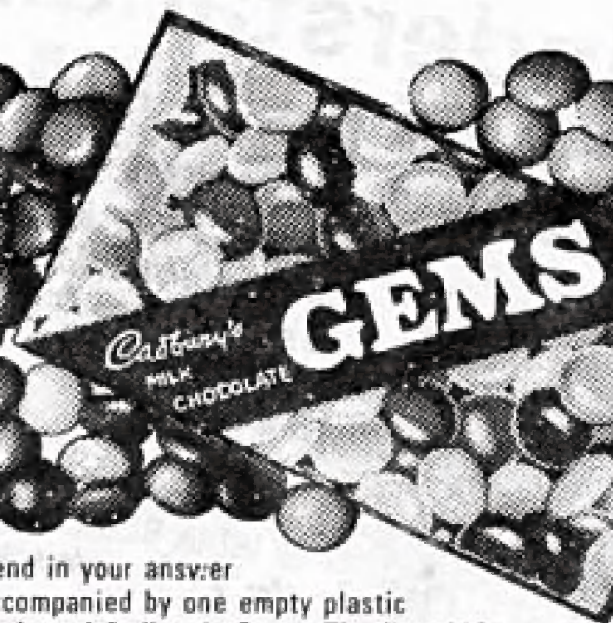
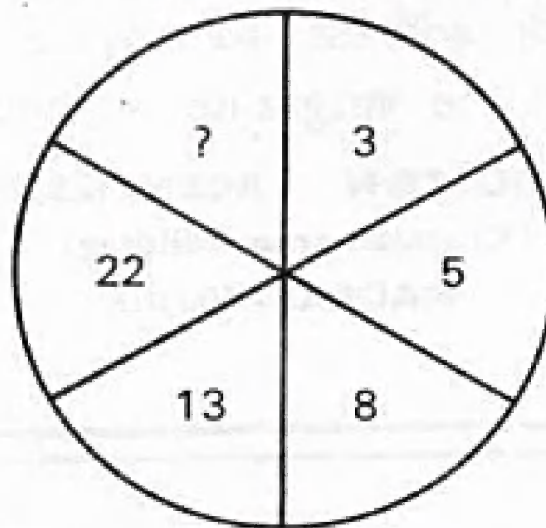
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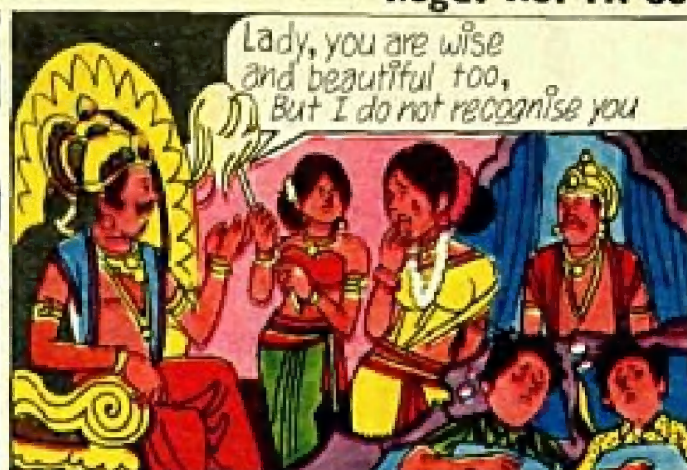
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